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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 833
By Maddox

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the good people of
Community Development Services, Inc. as they
celebrate thirty years of committed service in
Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause in its deliberations to recognize those outstanding individuals and institutions that have made invaluable contributions to the high quality of life present in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the good people with Community Development Services, Inc. are just such estimable citizens, and they recently celebrated thirty years of service to Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that any successful and prosperous society should have the finest services available to all of its citizens, and the efforts of the Community Development Services, Inc. have long provided such unsurpassed service to Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, this wonderful organization was born on July 1, 1971, when the West Tennessee Easter Seals announced a \$72,000 grant to open a "day care center" for thirty-two children who had been excluded from school because of their handicaps; the original staff of eight recruited children from Lake, Obion, and Weakley Counties; and

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WHEREAS, the doors were first opened in September in a house on the Campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin, which provided the building free of rent; during the first year of operation, university faculty and students logged more than 5,000 hours of volunteer work in support of the center's mission, and the center grew and flourished with their support as well as that of the Area Lions Club Telethon, cities, four county governments, churches, state and federal government, and numerous other organizations and individuals; and

WHEREAS, in July of 1972, an expanded grant allowed services to be extended to include a children's satellite in Paris and adult centers in Union City and Tiptonville; and

WHEREAS, CDS's mission was refined in 1974 when legislation was passed mandating public education for children with disabilities and all of the young clientele transferred to public schools; at that point, the chief priority became service to adults who had never had an opportunity to attend school or to receive an appropriate education, and, in 1975, an adult activity center was opened in Paris, and the adults in Weakley and Obion Counties moved to the small house on the UTM campus that had formerly housed the children's program; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, a new million-dollar facility approved by the State Building Commission was opened on land furnished by UTM to house a five-building complex with a mental health center and new mental retardation facility; within a year, most programs were transferred to this campus and continued to prosper; and

WHEREAS, with the establishment of day programs, many of the adults residing in the state's Arlington Development Center returned home, group homes began opening across the state, and many previously institutionalized adults and children were able to live a less restrictive life; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1980s, the program experienced tremendous success and continued to adapt; group homes were added, clients progressed to independent living, and regional Tennessee Easter Seal Society chapters were dissolved and consolidated under one administrative body in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 1985, Community Development Services, Inc. was chartered; at that time, its annual budget was half a million dollars and a staff of thirty were employed to serve sixty-one adults in day services and twenty-six children and adults in residential services; and

WHEREAS, in its second fifteen years of existence, CDS has continued to enhance its services, facilities, and programs; foster care has been incorporated, more group homes have been established, numerous important building projects have been completed, the Lion Junius White Workshop was opened, and “supported living” services were offered for those not needing the level of support present in a group home; and

WHEREAS, in April 2001, CDS received the Tennessee Association of Persons in Supported Employment “Supported Employment Agency Award” at their annual conference, an honor most befitting the level of laudable service provided by the estimable individuals of this organization; and

WHEREAS, currently, CDS maintains its numerous programs and continues to seek ways to enhance and refine its offerings; and

WHEREAS, CDS now supports over 110 individuals with its \$2.3 million budget, with 54 also receiving services in one of the residential options; to provide such a high level of service, CDS employs more than seventy praiseworthy individuals who have devoted more than 300 years of combined service; and

WHEREAS, with tremendous support from the community, a dedicated and determined staff, an admirable Board of Directors, and strong families, CDS has made a difference in the lives of countless developmentally-disabled Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee’s citizens have benefited from the quality, compassionate care provided by the men and women of CDS, and many owe a deep debt of gratitude to these devoted professionals for their gallant efforts; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor and commend the good people of Community Development Services, Inc. for their laudable dedication to the welfare of the people of Tennessee and express our deepest thanks for their tremendous contributions to Tennessee during their thirty years of service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.